



The Weekly Page

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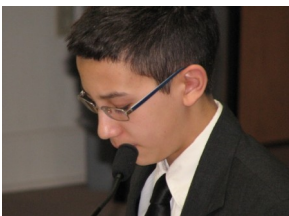
Pages Learn About Legislature



Mock committees debate bills

Pages worked individually or in small groups to research and write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They had their choice of working up a social bill or a fiscal bill to present in a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Students spent a day either researching social problems or playing the "Ax and Tax" budget game to get information for constructing their bills. They used class templates to transfer the information and their proposed solutions to a very real-looking House or Senate bill. Pages read their bills and "committee members," governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A "DO PASS" or "DO NOT PASS" recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee

Crime-fighting citizens to crush crime



Olympia – House Bill 1113 was introduced yesterday by Representative Johua Wyllie. "This bill addresses the issue of gang violence and will keep our communities safer," said Rep. Wyllie. "We have been getting reports from police

about a rise in gang violence. We have seen the evidence of the danger posed to our constituents, particularly youth," he said.

This bill allows police to train ordinary citizens to be better prepared to fight gang-related crime. A recent survey showed that the number of 10th grade students who considered themselves to be a member of a gang in the last 12 months effectively doubled from 2002 to 2006. "Just this year, three Washington teens were killed in gang-related shootings. HB 1113 is groundbreaking because it actually uses citizens, in addition to law enforcement officials, to fight the menace of gang-related crime," said Rep. Wyllie.

Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three "big ideas" for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.**

As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

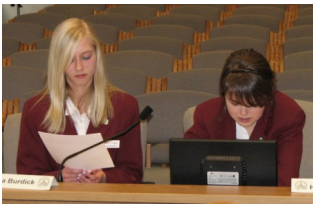


Legislators do the math

Olympia – House Bill 2013 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Josh Vasquez, Ean Tatum, and Baylor Hahn. “This bill addresses the issue of improving math skills and will prepare students in public schools for the high demand fields after graduation,” said Rep. Hahn. If this bill becomes a law the Legislature will establish a common math curriculum for public schools. The program will focus on memorizing formulas and knowing basic math functions which are needed in everyday life, according to Rep. Vasquez. A legislative committee will be responsible for finding the most effective math education programs in the nation and offering them to all public schools. “This will ensure that all districts will be teaching math in the same way,” said Rep. Tatum.



Senators crack down on drunk driving



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Ariana Burdick and Heather Brown introduced Senate Bill 5555, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the number of fatalities caused by

these irresponsible people,” said Sen. Burdick. Over the course of 24 years, the percentage of automobile fatalities caused by drunk driving has been around 50% in the state of Washington. When this bill becomes a law, the fine for drunk driving will increase to a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$10,000, and the driver will be required to install breath analyzer in the car which will prevent the car from starting if the driver is intoxicated.

House solves sleep deprivation problem in teenagers

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Lizze Jeschke, Aaron



Green, and Nat Jeschke. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprivation and will result in helping students get the required

sleep they need to be academically successful,” said Rep. Green. The new law will require public schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. The new law will also require a longer lunch period in all public schools of at least an extra hour. “This hour has been proven effective in some countries in improving the productiveness of their citizens and I believe it will be equally efficient in schools in the United States,” said Rep. Lizze Jeschke.

Rights for animal owners defended in House

Olympia – House Bill 1516 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Miina Skoog and Hanna Skoog. “This bill addresses the issue of animal owners’ rights and will make implanting micro chips in animals with Radio Frequency Identification Devices voluntary in our state,” said Rep. Hanna Skoog. Rep.

Miina Skoog has become concerned with the increasing pressure from proponents of the National Animal Identification System who want to “chip” animals and track their every movement. Both representatives are concerned that RFID chipping may become mandatory, since there has been federal legislation which has been introduced recently. “There have been studies that show animals developing cancer due to RFID chips. House Bill 1516 will ensure that animal owners will not have to risk their animals’ health and their right to decide what to do with their own animals,” said Rep. Miina Skoog.



Prison jobs ensure success after release

Olympia – Senate Bill 6328 was introduced yesterday by Senators David Pollock and Devin Reilly. “This bill addresses the issue of jail overpopulation and will establish

prison jobs for the inmates so they will not be repeat offenders,” said Sen. Pollock. This bill will eliminate jail entertainment programs and instead establish a paid work training program for the inmates. The income from the jobs will be split to provide the necessary needs of the prisoners and allow them to pay for their own entertainment programs. The training program will give them the required talents and skills to get their own jobs after their sentence is completed.



Senate calls for cuts/taxes

Olympia—Yesterday, the Senate Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Senators Jack McBride, Young Lee, James Dang, TaiSheng Yeager, Davante Taylor and Thomas McGahern regarding the projected revenue shortfall for the 2009-2011 biennium and the suggested remedies to balance the state operating budget. “We are in a terrible economic crisis, the worst we’ve seen in decades,” said Rep. Taylor. Although many legislators had made campaign promises not to raise taxes, the members saw a need to make up for lost revenues by increasing taxes on cigarettes, sodas, candy and gum. “These food items are impulse purchases and would not really be affected by a 5 cent soda tax or extending sales tax to candy and gum,” said Sen. McBride. Since smokers have



product loyalty to the cigarette industry, the legislators reasoned that they will continue to buy cigarettes even with the \$1 tax increase. These taxes will raise over \$500 million. Although Washington state has

one of the highest gas taxes in the nation, Sen. McGahern proposed a sales tax of 6.5 percent to the current tax rate. “Many people need to cut down on their carbon emissions and taxing gas will further help encourage this. Approximately \$520 million would be raised,” he said. Sen. Young advocated shifting money from the capital budget to the operating budget. “When there is a shortfall, expansion and construction are not prudent actions. Delaying unnecessary projects are important and can free up \$800 million,” he said. Cuts to existing services included reducing spending on goods and services by 25 percent, closing the foreign trade offices

overseas, cutting the marketing of state parks, reducing funding in the arts by eliminating the arts commission, and eliminating funding for class size reductions. “Art in public parks is unnecessary during these tough economic times; before we think about making our state more appealing, we should be focusing on more important things,” said Sen. Dang. It was felt that the state could send a positive message to struggling citizens by cutting the waste in its own offices. “We should be using technology to avoid using so much paper and printing services and become more efficient,” said Sen. McGahern. Sen. Taylor felt



that Washington products and state parks could sell themselves. “We can save \$2.8 million by eliminating spending for those advertising programs,” he said. While smaller class sizes could certainly help improve education, it would take more than the allotted funding of \$140 million to make much of an impact in each classroom, according to Sen. Yeager. “Let’s face it, we need to cut our services down to the bare bones in this weak economy. And there will definitely have to be a few taxes raised to balance this biennium’s budget. We are all going to have to tighten our belts and suffer some uncomfortable situations until we fix this problem,” said Sen. Yeager.

For young athletes, education comes first



Olympia – Senate Bill 6395 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Heather Lawrence and Amanda Williams. “This bill addresses the issue of academic requirements for high school athletes and will standardize the

participation guidelines in all public schools. It requires student athletes to have a GPA of 2.0 with no failing classes allowed,” said Rep. Williams. This bill was introduced this session because coaches and educators were frustrated by the fact that some districts allowed failing students to play in games but others did not. “Some of our schools around the area hold low expectations for their athletes, but, this does students no favors in the future,” said Rep. Lawrence. “High schools are suppose to prepare students for the real world. Allowing them to play on school teams when they are barely making the grade academically sets them up for failure beyond school,” he said.

Plastic bags banned

Olympia—House Bill 2376 was introduced yesterday by Representative Christina Darnell. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags and will prevent any further damages to the environment,” said Rep. Darnell. Plastic bags are killing the environment. They take 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture and only a percentage get recycled. If this bill becomes a law, all stores will be required to eliminate plastic bags and only use nylon or cotton bags, saving the environment a lot of pollution trouble, according to Rep. Darnell.



Elderly drivers forced off roads



Olympia – Senate Bill 5050 was introduced yesterday by Senator Steven Soroka. “This bill addresses the issue of traffic safety and will reduce the number of accidents caused by older drivers,” said Sen. Soroka. The new law will require people 75 years of age and older to take a road test in order to renew their drivers licenses.

Get movin’

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Nicole Tom introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will help our kids stay healthy,” said Sen. Tom. The bill will increase the amount of physical education student have to participate in each day to 90 minutes, provide healthier lunches for students and also teach students how to make healthier choices. “We are hoping that we will be able to increase the health of students, improving their lives,” said Sen. Tom.



Teaching of evolution supported by Willmores



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Candace and Mitchell Willmore introduced House Bill 3333, which addresses the issue of teaching evolution in public schools. “The bill is a good one because it will provide students with

the knowledge that they will need for the future. Parents who do not want their children to learn about the theory of evolution will be able remove their children from the class,” said Rep. Candace Willmore. This bill will require the teaching of evolution in public high schools. The teachers will present modern arguments of evolution, and students will be able to further understand a variety of scientific views. Findings show that colleges, including religious institutions such as Brigham Young, Baylor, and Notre Dame teach evolution. With students being taught this in high school, they will be prepared for college science courses.

Feed the children

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Joely Grief, Sammantha Daniels, and Alyssa

Brandland introduced Senate Bill 5133, which addresses the issue of hungry children in Washington. “The bill is a good one because it will re-



duce the number of young people who do not get enough to eat,” said Sen. Grief. Last year, 1.2 million people went to food banks for help; 40 percent of them were children. The bill addresses this problem by establishing more food banks where only families with children under the age of 18 will be served. “The food will come from restaurants and bakeries who will donate perishable food items that they would ordinarily throw away at the end of the day or that could not be sold,” said Sen. Brandland. A program to allow grocery stores to ask their customers to donate a dollar to their state food banks will also be established. The donated money would be given to the state. In return, the state would take that money and buy food for the food banks from the grocery stores that participated in the money donation drive. “It’s a win-win situation for everyone,” said Sen. Daniels.

Liberty, justice, and healthcare for all



Olympia – Senate Bill 6428 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Page Ive and Katy Mullen. “This bill addresses the issue of children’s health insurance and will ensure that children receive the medical care

they need regardless of their financial situation,” said Rep. Mullen. Nationally, one-third of uninsured children went without medical care for the entire year in 2003. The bill consists of a .2 percent tax on annual incomes to fund healthcare for children in unstable financial situations. The implementation of this bill will include monitoring the relationship between emergency room visits and amount of health-care covered. “If emergency room visits decrease and the amount of children receiving healthcare increases, we can begin to see a savings,” said Rep. Ive.

Guest speakers visit Page School

Senate intern Kayla Johnson; Amanda Meyer, Voter Education and Outreach Publications Manager for the Secretary of State's office; Representative Marko Liias (D-21st) and Director Paula Hammond of the Department of Transportation joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs and the issues they are currently working on. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.



Can sleepy teens get a break?

Olympia – House Bill 1343 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jennifer Overmiller and Maia Paroginog. "This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and will provide a more efficient learning environment for high school students," said Rep. Overmiller. The bill will establish a delayed start time of one hour for schools that begin at 8 a.m. or earlier. Studies show that teenagers find it harder to fall asleep than younger children or adults. Experts find that their brains are wired to feel tired at around 11 p.m. or midnight. "When students have to get up at 6 a.m. to start high school classes, they aren't getting the required 8.5 or 9.5 hours needed for effective learning," said Rep. Paroginog.

Senator takes on spyware



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Luke Seerden introduced Senate Bill 5278, which addresses the issue of computer spyware and malware programs. "The bill is a good one because it will help protect computers from spyware infections," said Sen. Seerden. Creating and initiating these programs will be illegal. Sen. Seerden hopes this bill will fill in many of the gaps

and gray areas within the law that make spyware legal, for the most part. "If the bill passes, computer users may be finding the worldwide web a safer place in the future," he said.

Schools have dropped the ball on drop-outs

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Drew Conley, Hope Grant-Herriot, and Joseph Simpson introduced House Bill 1001, which addresses the issue of high school dropouts. "The bill is a good one because it motivates kids to be more interested in school," said Rep. Simpson. A state report on dropouts show that 47 percent of students say that classes aren't interesting to them. This bill will promote more relevant, engaging and hands-on class work. "Kids are our future, and we must ensure that all students graduate from high school," said Rep. Conley.



Senators put pollution in the bag

Olympia – Senate Bill 7342 was introduced yesterday by Senators Daniel Garza, Mark Balangue and Marie Louise Farley. "This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags and will clean up the environment. By Jan. 5, 2010, all bags provided by retail



and grocery stores must be non-plastic and reusable," said Sen. Garza. Plastic bags kill and endanger most marine life. "They waste our precious oil resources,

and replacing them with reusable bags will definitely help the environment," says Sen. Balangue. Americans use between 30-100 billion bags per year, enough to circle the planet at least 31 times! Only a fraction of the bags make it into the recycling bin. It can take thousands of years for the bags to decompose.

Competitive edge results in Jeopardy win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were comprised of individuals who had learned the most during their week in Page School and were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.



Senators find a way to cut down on drunk driving

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Will Brugato and Alejandro Campos introduced Senate Bill 5432, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce repeat DUI offenses by up to 64 percent,” said Sen. Brugato. This bill will require all convicted drunk drivers to install and use an ignition interlock device in the cars they use. This device works like a breathalyzer, and if the driver’s alcohol content is above a certain number, the car will not start. Law-enforcement officials say ignition interlocks work. “When the device is on, you see a decrease in repeat offenders,” says Barbara Lauer of Florida’s Department of Motor Vehicles.



Lethal injections, a quick way out or a gateway to more pain?

Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Alex Ericson and Wesley Kosierowski. “This bill addresses the issue of lethal injections and will change the procedure from using a 3-drug cocktail to an overdose of just one drug,” said Sen. Ericson. The method currently used by the state has been known to cause cruel and unusual punishment when the drugs are administered improperly, according to Rep. Kosierowski. “If the first drug does not put the inmate into a deep sleep and the second drug paralyzes him, when the third drug is administered, he is unable to communicate the excruciating pain it delivers. The third drug makes the prisoner feel as if his veins are on fire. This is a violation of the prisoner’s Eighth Amendment right,” he said. This bill will prohibit the 3-drug cocktail and replace it with an overdose of one lethal drug in all future executions.

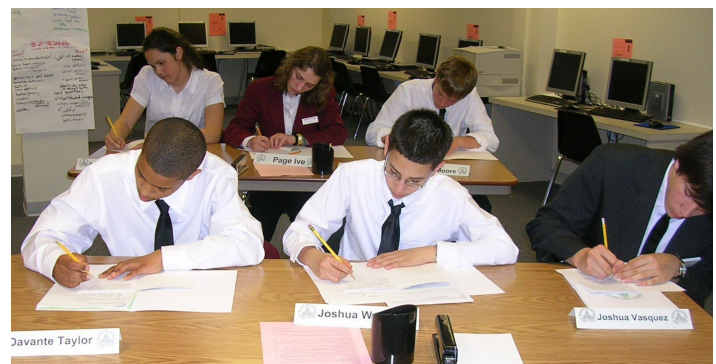
House tries to balance budget

Olympia—Yesterday Representatives David Moore, Miles Reichenbach, Brittany Domine, LeeRoy Lewin, and Caleb Butcher met with the House Ways and Means Committee to pound out hard



solutions to a serious budget shortfall predicted for the next biennium. “There just doesn’t seem to be any way around raising some taxes,” said Rep. Lewin. Rep. Reichenbach was in

favor of raising sales tax from 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent as a temporary measure to increase revenues. “While this may seem to be a large increase, it is not unreasonable. For example, on a \$100 purchase the new tax would raise the total price from \$108.80 to \$109.80. People don’t usually decide to put off a purchase because of the sales tax,” he said. Other taxes proposed were extending sales tax to doctors, dentists and lawyers, and putting a 5 cent tax on cans of soda. “Soda is a luxury item. The average soda costs about a dollar, so a 5 cent tax isn’t too much and it would bring in \$272 million,” said Rep. Moore. A possible cut to marketing for state parks was offered by Rep. Butcher. “Our state does not need to spend money advertising our parks. People already know how great they are and will continue to use them,” he said. This would save an additional \$132,000. Additional cuts include the class size reduction (\$140 million), spending on goods and services (25 percent cut), eliminating health coverage for illegal immigrant children (\$61 million) and closing the state film office (\$897,000). “Illegal immigrant children should not even be in the state, let alone the government paying for their healthcare,” said Rep. Domine. “Healthcare spending should be for our legal children.” According to Rep. Moore, Hollywood producers know where Washington State is located and know what it looks like. “We don’t need to throw away money to try and get them to come here,” he said. As for the class size reduction, if it were cut by 40 percent, nearly \$364 million could be saved. “The current amount is not enough to remedy the class size problem. Funding to reduce a class by only one or two students, doesn’t give much relief to a teacher,” said Rep. Lewin. The current economic forecast predicts over \$9 billion in lost revenue for the next biennium. “We are going to have to make serious sacrifices in the next two years, if we want to turn things around,” said Rep. Reichenbach.



Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/PageSchool/. This newsletter has been posted there.